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L E T T E R

TO THE  
CITIZENS of LONDON,

CONCERNING  
A LATE CREATED EARL:

With a Word to the Author of *The Considerations*  
*on the Conduct of a late great Commoner, &c.*

By R----- S-----, Linen-Draper.

“ But Yesterday the Word of Cæsar might  
“ Have stood against the World; now lies he there,  
“ And none so poor to do him Reverence.”

SHAKESPEAR.

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LETTER

TO THE

CITIZENS OF LONDON



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L E T T E R  
TO THE  
CITIZENS of LONDON.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

**Y**OU may, perhaps, be surprized that  
a tradesman, and that of a sort which  
is not the genteelest in the world,  
should take upon him to write a letter to all  
the citizens of this rich, flourishing, and  
powerful metropolis ; but the occasion is  
so great, that any man, let his condition  
be what it will, has a right to offer his  
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sentiments to the public upon it; and truth is equally acceptable to every candid man, though it come from the shop of a linen-draper, simple and unadorned, as if it was ushered in with all the pomp and pageantry of an ostentatious courtier; and an honest mechanic may feel more for an injured character, than a vain, adulatory, sycophantic placeman, who flatters a great man in power with a mercenary, interested view. I confess my indignation has been greatly excited by the clamours raised against, and the abuse thrown upon, one of the greatest characters of this or any other age. In the first place, he is accused of accepting of a peerage; in the next, of a place; in the third, of deserting his country; and lastly, of having connected himself with lord Bute: to all which heinous and most detestable charges, I will endeavour to give as good an answer as I can. As to all the witticisms current in the mouths of wags and in the news-papers, such as his being *ducked in a bath, the great commoner turned little peer, lord Cheatam, &c.* I must suffer them to be worn out, and become threadbare of themselves, as they infallibly soon must: and, my fellow citizens, give me leave to be so free as to declare, that I am afraid I too well observe, in this instance, what Voltaire has emphatically said of you, that  
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*you are inconstants comme la mere, qui vous environne.*

In answer to the first and heaviest accusation, by which, according to the fashionable phrase, it is said his memory will be *execrated* by posterity, let me ask, whether no minister was ever a peer before? Was not Cecil created lord Burleigh? and what minister in this country was ever greater, or served his country more faithfully, after he was called to the upper house? Had Pitt, as minister, continued in the House of Commons, from his weight in that place, and the high offices he formerly filled, he must, and would have been expected by the public, to have taken the lead there. What is generally understood by taking the lead, is undertaking the irksome, fatiguing task of explaining and vindicating the measures of government, to every captious, cavilling, meddling declaimer, who thinks he can talk himself into a place, by exposing the conduct of a ministry. Though no man was ever more capable of silencing these self-interested harangues, yet time, the noiseless hand of time, hath impaired that constitution, once so robust, and rendered him incapable of so troublesome an employment. A worthy alderman, one of our representatives in parliament, has been

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sometimes so obliging, as to get me admittance into the gallery of a certain august assembly, where I attended one day last winter, upon an important motion, when the illustrious personage in question seemed so extremely weak and exhausted, that he could with difficulty go through with the task he had that day undertaken; the drops of sweat run down his cheek, and I dare say he felt very severely, long after, the fatigues of that debate. If he was so unequal to the debate of one day, how is it possible for him, labouring under infirmities, and at best enjoying but a valetudinary state of health, to undertake the abovementioned arduous task?

I come now to the next charge, of his taking a place. Because his health will not permit him to manage the affairs of administration in the great assembly of the nation, may he not still direct the measures in the council; because he is not able to command the squadron, may he not direct its destination? I do not know that the late first lord of the treasury, without derogating the least from his merit, (of which I think he has a great share) I do not know, I say, that he was remarkable for a Ciceronian elocution. But, taking for granted what these cavillers pretend, that  
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this personage had a constitution strong enough to argue down the errors of a listening throng, I maintain he can more effectually exercise it, and it is at this time more wanted in the upper house. The experience of last winter is sufficient to convince us of the truth of this assertion: the opposition, it was universally allowed, had a great superiority in number, and excellency of speakers; insomuch that two questions were carried, it was imagined, merely from want of them: one question was, whether the word *require* should be substituted in the place of another word, which was thought to be not so energetic. I am sure, my fellow citizens, you have good reason to recollect this circumstance, for stocks fell two per cent. the next day, and a great man in the common council will never forget it, as he had bought a considerable sum in the four per cents. a week before upon time. Was it necessary for the duke of Newcastle to be in the House of Commons, in order to direct the operations of government? Was it requisite for the duke of Marlborough, a minister as well as general, to be a member of that assembly? Was lord Bolingbroke or lord Oxford peers? or were they ministers? Because lord Bath, an ambitious, avaricious declaimer, was silenced by being removed to the upper house,

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house, can therefore a parallel be drawn between him and Mr. Pitt, who had grown grey in the service of his country; and in his old age, to quiet the minds of the people, consented to support an administration in the upper house, where it most, I had almost said, only wanted to be sustained?

I come now to the last article of impeachment, which I am bold to say is equally false and ill-grounded as any of the preceding ones; namely, that he has connected himself with lord Bute. Let me ask any candid man why he thinks so; his answer certainly must be, his neighbour told him so; and I, who am likewise his neighbour, tell him it is not so: one assertion, unsupported by proof or evidence, is surely as good as another no better founded. So far from thinking him connected with lord Bute, we have all the reason in the world to think he is not so, unless you will suppose that the duke of G. is subject to the same influence; and you might just as well say, that Wilkes lives upon a footing of intimacy with him; for the speech about the tomb-stone was made to his face, and the North Briton only written in the closet.

I cannot dismiss this subject, without making a few remarks upon a pamphlet entitled,

entitled, *An Enquiry into the Conduct of a late Right Honourable Commoner*, which is falsely and maliciously imputed to a noble earl, who not long ago filled the same office which the great commoner now holds, with an intention most assuredly of injuring the character of that truly worthy nobleman; for was he author of that pamphlet, which I am confident he is not, he would be the basest and vainest of men: base to the last degree he must be, in betraying a private conference, which, amongst relations, friends and intimates, should always be held sacred and inviolable; and the conference now under consideration, from its very nature, implied the preservation of the strictest secrecy. Vain he must be to talk so much of himself, and be so fond of bestowing upon his own dear person the epithets of worthy, honest, candid, upright, firm, steady, just, conscientious, &c. &c.

The enquirer, after having compared the great commoner to sir Francis Bacon and lord Bath, neither of which characters, however, he any ways resembles, except in that of taking a peerage, in which he is likewise similar to a hundred and fifty other persons, accuses him of the inconsistency of making the most energetic declaration against the German war, and then plunging

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us deeper into it, than any of his predecessors had done. People are very apt to argue upon points they do not perfectly understand; and there is nothing in which the enemies of this illustrious personage seem to be more mistaken than this.

After the taking of Minorca, dismay was painted in every countenance; and it was almost a disgrace upon the continent of Europe to be thought an Englishman; in so great contempt had the British name fallen, from the blunders and timidity of those who were then intrusted with the helm of government. It would be wasting time and paper, to recapitulate what happened when this great man was called in, to preserve the last remains of British glory; and to retrieve, if possible, the national honour. We had already entered into treaties and engagements with the German states, before he was intrusted with the direction of affairs; he was under a necessity of taking us as he found us; and all that he could do, according to the mercantile phrase, was, to make the best of a bad bargain. It would, therefore, have been the height of perfidiousness and treachery, to have broke those engagements so solemnly entered into. His conquering America in Germany, is not so absurd a metaphor  
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as many seem to think it. Did not he, by finding employment for the French arms in Germany, prevent their sending troops to America?

The Enquirer goes on, and says, "Finding, soon after the accession of his present majesty, that the earl of Bute was in possession of the royal ear, he was the instrument of that noble lord's introduction to the post of secretary of state, in which he acted a very sensible part; for if he was apprehensive of any secret influence, surely it was his business to draw the hidden adviser from behind the curtain, and make him stand forth a partaker of responsibility." When the Enquirer speaks of the conduct of the late commoner relative to the parliamentary articles, one would be tempted to think he had written it to be applied to a certain lawyer; but finding that gentleman not so fortunate as he expected, he has tacked the late commoner's name to it, in order to swell his performance to the size of a shilling pamphlet. Any man who attended that day's debate, must instantly agree with me in what I now assert, by reading the following passage: "He was for and against the preliminaries of peace; he liked and he disliked them; and, in a  
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word, he was full of nothing but doubts, and hopes, and fears."

As to what he says, of the commoner's withdrawing from the cause and party in the question of the general warrants, every body knows that his health would not permit him to attend it; and had he attempted to have been constantly present at those debates, he must have withdrawn not only from the cause of liberty, but from this mortal world. The Enquirer might as well have said, that Hampden or Brutus withdrew from the cause of liberty.

I come next to consider the last conference related pretty fully in the *Enquiry into the Conduct of a late Right Honourable Commoner*; which, if it is authentic, militates very strongly against whoever it is that has thus betrayed a private conversation; for although no secrecy might be absolutely promised on either side, yet, in intercourses of that sort, from the very nature of them, there is an implied obligation that they should always be preserved inviolably secret in the breast of every man of true honour: but, for the sake of argument, we will for a moment allow, that every syllable there related is strictly true, and we shall find that Mr. Pitt acted consistently

sistently with himself : not the Mr. Pitt described by the Enquirer ; but the wise, the steady, the upright patriot. At the conclusion of this sentence the Enquirer goes on, “ Mr. Pitt said, good God ! how can you compare him” (lord L-----n) “ to the duke of Grafton, lord Shelburne, and Mr. Conway ?” How indeed ? A man must be blind to every perfection, deaf to all reason, callous to every feeling, to admit the comparison one single instant. The noble lord may have his merit, and far be it from me to depreciate his deserts : but for any man who is not worthy of an apartment in St. Luke’s hospital, to put him upon a footing with the duke of Grafton, lord Shelburne, or Mr. Conway, is a piece of ingenuity far above my slender capacity to comprehend. All that any person, endued with the most acrimonious malevolence, ever had to object to the first of the three last mentioned persons, was, that he was of a singular character ; which, in one sense, is literally true ; for now-a-days, application, understanding, and steadiness, in men of superior birth and fortune, are certainly extremely singular ; and so very singular, that a man possessed of them is regarded as a prodigy or phænomenon, not with admiration and respect, but with outward contempt, tinged, however, with secret envy

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for deviating from the usual ways of persons of fashion and distinction. The second of those great officers of the crown enjoys likewise a considerable degree of singularity, if great attention, and a thirst for knowledge and information, are esteemed such. The third is the very Curtius of liberty, who jumped into the gulf, by endeavouring to blow up the last dying sparks of British freedom. The restoration, exaltation, and continuation of this soldier in the public cause, cannot but administer a warmth to the heart of even a lukewarm Englishman.

Perhaps it may be asked, why the late commoner did not, instead of accepting of a side place, take the highest office in the state, viz. that of first lord of the Treasury. It is impossible for me to know the thoughts of that celebrated personage; consequently it is out of my power to assign what may be his true motive for not having taken upon himself that employment; but his principal reason, in all probability, was, his dislike to be always surrounded by an obsequious, hungry crowd, un-versed as he is in the low tricks of court intrigues, unskilled in borough-jobbing, in the arts of coaxing, wheedling, and threatening that race of men, who haunt the levees of the great. He always openly avowed his de-  
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testation of a multitude of dependents; and, during the time of his directing the grand operations of government, he made but one bishop; and the returns he received at the hands of that ungrateful prelate, were certainly no encouragement to him, to desire to be the dispenser of places and preferments.

There is a set of men, who, though almost too contemptible to deserve a serious answer, yet I will endeavour to reply to, that have always dated the period of a war with France or Spain, as following close upon the heels of this illustrious personage's advancement to any share in the administration. All Europe knows the terror even the mention of the name of Mr. Pitt impresses in the minds of our natural enemies: that dread, of consequence, is the most likely means of preventing those perfidious nations from infringing the treaties now subsisting; and will, most probably, make them act with the greater circumspection, and command that respect and awe, which Great-Britain, from her real power, has a right to expect from the powers on the continent of Europe.

The Enquirer has thought proper to make this nobleman, in order to blacken his

his character, and to rob him of that popularity of which he is still possessed in the heart of every true friend to his country, the sole promoter of the additional duty upon malt: he thinks to ensure the huzzas to his own party, of which he hopes to rob this illustrious patriot; but a very little time, I hope, will fully convince him of his error; and he will find the tide of applause, which seems now to have abated somewhat of its usual force, only to be collecting a greater body, which will flow, like a torrent, irresistible to all opposition, and bearing down before it all the malevolence, the spight, and detraction of those little spirits, that are always cavilling, and looking out for imperfections with a microscopic eye. At the time a new duty was laid upon malt, the exigencies of the times required it: surely this nobleman could have no particular interest in loading the people with one tax, that might appear more grievous than another; on the contrary, it was then his business to have loaded his country with as gentle a hand as circumstances would admit. An enormous national debt, it is beyond dispute, was contracted during his administration; and the advantages, great as they were, reaped by that accumulation of expence, were dastardly and dishonourably given up by his successors



cessors in power : but it is a great question, supposing he had never assumed the reins of power, whether those who would have been entrusted with the helm of affairs, would not have spent at least as great, if not a much greater, sum, without acquiring any solid advantage whatsoever ; on the contrary, sacrificing and dishonouring the British name to all posterity.

His accepting of a pension has been much blamed ; but, in my opinion, the only fault I can possibly find, relative to that stipend, is, that it is infinitely too small ; and I only wish, that his income was made equal to that of a person in a superior rank, who, when Mr. Pitt proposed vigorous measures against the Spaniards, who were at that time secretly leagued against us with our declared enemies the French, told him that his property was very inconsiderable in this country, and that he had nothing to lose by a war. “ I have that to lose,” replied the intrepid patriot, “ which you have not ;--- a character !”

It is impossible, after the repeated declaration of this illustrious personage, that he ever can submit to engage in the same administration with lord Bute ; and we can hardly think that a coronet will induce him  
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to change those sentiments. Can it be imagined he should be connected with a man, who treated him in the most ignominious manner, by putting his acceptance of a pension in the Gazette, contrary to the practice of all times?

To meet with the approbation and applause of wise and good men, is one of the rewards of the virtuous in this state of human vicissitudes; but whoever expects an universal and uninterrupted applause, although he conducts himself with the greatest prudence and integrity, must have a life of perpetual vexation: his labour and toil must be more fatiguing than the daily attendance on the most slavish, laborious, and irksome employment amongst the meanest of the people.

If the popular breath could, on all occasions, dilate or compress the virtuous mind, it would be far more optionable to be the most insignificant of mortals in an innocent society, than the greatest man in his majesty's dominions. But the man whose pursuits are constantly guided by integrity; whose conduct is uniform; whose abilities are always exerted for the good of his country; this man proceeds in the execution of his duty. Let others view his sentiments and conduct  
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in whatever light their caprice may dictate, he feels no base, no dishonourable motives, the springs of his actions; he acts the part of an honest man, being unmoved by fame, though at the same time not insensible of that satisfaction which arises from the approbation of his own conscience.

The virtuous and great, though always honoured when dead, have almost universally been treated with rancour and malevolence during their lives; but it is a tax humanity must pay, and, like shades in a picture, only serve to enliven and set off the captivating parts of the piece.

Those who have thought the great man, who is the principal subject of these sheets, has acted an odious and a shocking part, by accepting of a peerage, and that he accepted it as a price for his labours; if they consider a-while, must be sensible, that the only real payment he ever received, was the affections of the generality of the nation. Although there has been a very large party formed to depreciate his services in the last war, and to bring contempt upon his character, their attempts, however, have only proved, that they are declared and irreconcilable enemies to his virtues. When we compare integrity and rectitude of conduct

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with a title, the latter is only as the shadow to the substance; and the man must be a very absurd weak being, who would barter solid virtue for a name so unconnected with his happiness.

I must, therefore supplicate you, my fellow citizens, if any of you have been so mean, so fickle, and inconsistent as to have altered your opinions of this magnanimous patriot, for the little reason of his having taken a title, to return again to your wonted strength of argument; the citizens of London have, in all ages, taken the lead, and set the example to all the other aggregate bodies in this far-extended and powerful empire; and I hope, in this particular, you will make a precedent worthy of the imitation of all the corporations in England. Her majesty's fertility, God be praised, will soon afford you an opportunity of approaching the throne with an address of congratulation on an increase of the Protestant succession, when I trust you will lay hold of the occasion, after having expressed your joy on the happy primary cause of your address, to declare likewise your infinite satisfaction at his majesty's wisdom and paternal kindness, in calling to his councils, the wise, the intrepid, the honest earl of Chatham.

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The Enquirer has thought proper to praise lord T----- to the skies. He has merit, I will allow; but his principal merit consisted in being steady to Mr. Pitt; and the first method of his ever gaining a popular character, was by quitting his place at the time of Mr. Pitt's going out of office, and by going to the lord-mayor's feast with him in the same chariot; and I am afraid he has forfeited all the gales of popularity, by joining the framers of the American stamp-act, by which Great-Britain had very near been covered with blood and desolation.

I need not inform you, my fellow-citizens, of the falshood of that assertion in particular, in the Enquiry, of which there are many, that endeavours have been made to get a complimentary address from the city of London on the late changes; all those who are members of the corporation, know this ideal effort to be the phantom of the writer's own brain.

I cannot finish, without desiring my fellow-citizens to consult the duke of Sully's Memoirs for the character of an accomplished statesman, drawn by a man who was himself the most upright, steady, wise and honest minister of his age; which character,

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acter, I think, in every respect applicable to the great earl of Chatham.

Let me assure my good friends, the respectable inhabitants of this ancient city, that what I have here said, in vindication of this great man's character, are the pure dictates of an impartial and unbiassed heart, and that interest has no share whatever in the justice here done him; neither he, nor any of his family, were ever my customers, nor do I expect to sell one yard of cloth the more for having written this pamphlet.

I need not inform you, my fellow-citizens, of the late attention in particular, in the city of London, to get a complete edition of the city of London, and the changes; all those who are members of the corporation, know this is a great effort to be the phantom of the writer's own brain.

I cannot finish, without defining my fellow-citizens to consult the Duke of Grafton's letter for the character of an account of the late Duke of Grafton, drawn by a man who was himself the most upright, steady, wise and honest minister of his age; which character



